Ripped from the ROUNDUP

Ripped straight from the pages of old Space News Roundups, here's what happened at JSC on this date:

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NASA has announced 17 new astronaut candidates for the Space Shuttle Program, four of whom now work at the Johnson Space Center.

Current JSC employees selected to become astronaut candidates are U.S. Army Maj. James C. Adamson, a flight controller in the Systems Division; Marsha S. Ivins, a flight simulation engineer with the Aircraft Operations Division; Dr. Ellen L. Shulman, a medical officer with the Medical Sciences Division; and Charles L. Veach, an aerospace engineer and pilot with the Aircraft Operations Division..

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A month of work remains before Space Shuttle *Columbia* rolls from its Orbiter Processing Facility hangar at the Kennedy Space Center to be mated with its external tank and solid rocket boosters in the Vehicle Assembly Building.

Workers in Florida prepared this week for the crew equipment interface test aboard *Columbia*. The crew for the STS-28 mission will take part in the test scheduled to begin this weekend. *Columbia* will be commanded by Brewster Shaw, a veteran of two previous shuttle missions-STS-9 and STS-61B. Dick Richards will serve as pilot. Rounding out the crew are Mission Specialists Dave Leestma, Jim Adamson and Mark Brown. Richards, Adamson and Brown will make their first space flights. Leestma served as mission specialist on STS-41G.

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Two of JSC's own returned this week when astronauts Norm Thagard and Bonnie Dunbar arrived from Russia for three weeks of life sciences training in support of joint U.S.-Russian space flights.

Accompanying Thagard and Dunbar were their cosmonaut crew mates Vladimir Dezhurov, Gennady Strekalov, Anatoly Solovyev, Nikolai Budarin, Yury Onufrienko and Alexandr Poleshchuk.


ROUNDUP
Frosch, Yardley cover new space technology in STS development

Street smarts: pedestrian close calls on the rise

By Mary Alice Pruessner

Crossing the street is a skill most of us learned in grade school – stop and look both ways before crossing the street.

In the history of JSC, there have been at least five cases of pedestrians being struck by vehicles. The last pedestrian/vehicle accident was in 1994.

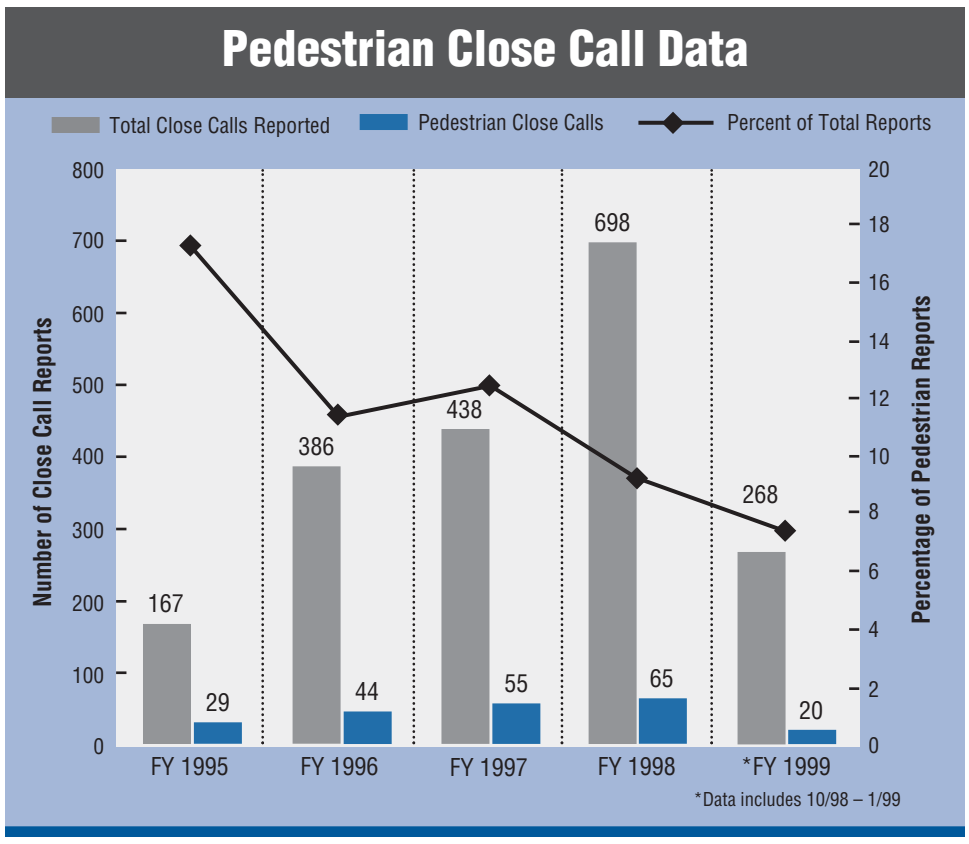
To date there has never been a pedestrian/vehicle fatality. However, in reviewing the Close Call reports for the last five years, it becomes clear that there have been many, many times that someone was just plain lucky.This is especially true in recent months.

The crosswalk issue was studied in 1996 by a subcommittee of the Executive Safety Committee. They made a series of site modification recommendations that were implemented in 1997. Since that time, the number of pedestrian reports has gone up, but the percentage of the total Close Call reports has gone down (see graph).

As more attention and energy has been directed to this subject, it has become a very emotional issue. One particular event reflects the paradox of the pedestrian/driver perspective. Two separate close calls were filed for the same event, one by the driver, one by the pedestrian. The pedestrian's account asserted that the vehicle failed to yield to the pedestrian, that he was "almost hit," and recommended that "vehicular safety be mandated." The driver's account stated that she saw the pedestrian crossing the road, but she did not see a crosswalk, was driving "within posted speed limits" and "was no where near hitting the pedestrian."

Another recent close call event demonstrates the increasing emotional volatility of this issue. As a vehicle drove through a crosswalk with pedestrians already in the street, one of the pedestrians yelled at the driver. The driver yelled back. The situation escalated until the driver pulled over to the side of the street and brandished a tennis racket at the pedestrians in a very heated conversation. No one was injured and it did not escalate past this point.

The bottom line is common sense – for both the pedestrian and the driver. There is so much at stake for such minimal effort. Remember the simple facts of staying safe. Always be aware of your surroundings, drive defensively and watch out for pedestrians. ■



NASA technology leads to oil patch patent

Bernt Hellesoe, president of UNITECH International, Inc., decided to consolidate his Houston and Bergen, Norway, offices in the greater Clear Lake area in 1996 because of proximity to clients and access to NASA's engineering. His decision paid off.

Within a year, UNITECH yielded a patent for the Multi Quick Connector stab plate based on technology discovered during one of JSC's annual Inspection events. The MQC stab plate has generated millions of dollars in revenue and contributed to lowering production costs of oil and gas.

"Our annual Inspection is one of the many ways we work to share our technologies, expertise and state-of-the-art facilities with the business and academic community," said JSC Director George Abbey. "UNITECH's patented Multi Quick Connector is a prime example of how NASA's research and technologies have been applied in many industries and have led to improvements and rich rewards in science, engineering, manufacturing, operations and training activities."

Hellesoe participated in Inspection 97 and was exposed to technologies that inspired the development and patent for UNITECH's MQC stab plate.

"I was introduced to a number of technologies at NASA including robotics, manipulators and the loading arm used for the shuttle," Hellesoe said. "Although NASA deals in space and UNITECH deals with the deep sea, we are still using the same principle of loading and unloading payload. The difference is that NASA uses a step-by-step approach and we were attempting to complete tasks all at once. The step-by-step approach turned out to be our solution and it put us on the right track to developing and patenting the Multi Quick Connector stab plate."

UNITECH uses Remote Operating Vehicles to connect and disconnect couplers under water. ROVs are necessary because control lines cannot be hooked up by divers in five to six thousand feet of water. The MQC stab plate operates under the guidance of a ROV and is significant because it improves reliability and safety during ROV docking and connection phases, all of its parts are retrievable, all of the critical seals, latching and locking details are on the ROV side and it offers a separation of couplers for test purposes, without requiring undocking. Since debuting on the market about a year ago, the MQC stab plate has generated approximately $5 million in revenue for UNITECH and contributes to lowering production costs of oil and gas.

"UNITECH continues to move forward in part because NASA allows people like me the opportunity to develop new ideas based on their existing technology," said Hellesoe. ■

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The following discount tickets are available at the Exchange Stores

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Sony Loew's Theaters				$5.00
AMC Theaters				$4.75
Fiesta Texas	adult	$18.25	(child under 48")	$15.50
Astroworld Early Bird (valid through May 31)				$17.75
Astroworld One-day Admission				$21.00
Astroworld Season Pass (valid at all Texas Six Flags Theme Parks and Water World)				$54.75
Water World				$10.75
Moody Gardens (2 of 6 events)				$9.75
Sea World	adult	$27.25	child (age 3-11)	$18.25
Schlitterbahn Water Park	adult	$20.75	child (age 3-11)	$17.50
Space Center Houston (JSC civil service employees free.)	adult	$10.25	child (age 4-11)	$6.50
Space Center Houston Annual Pass				$18.75
Splash Town Water Park	adult	$14.50	(child 48" and under)	$11.50